

INTRODUCTION

California's local jail system housed an average number of 74,937 inmates per day in 2000. The gathering of data, identifying trends and the ability to make projections about such a large system are crucial to the local jail system's ability to function safely and securely on a long-term basis. The responsibility that the Board of Corrections (BOC) retains for gathering jail system-related data is one of its key functions.

The Jail Profile Survey is the instrument designed to collect jail system data. In the fourth quarter of 1995, the Jail Profile Survey became fully operational. Prior to 1995, beginning in the early 1980s, jail data were gathered yearly, and only in the form of an Average Daily Population (ADP). The ADP represented the sum of all the local jail facilities' average population figures for a calendar year. In the early 1990s, the BOC and the California State Sheriffs' Association realized that collecting data only once a year did not provide opportunity to identify and monitor trends occurring within the local jail system, nor did it offer any tools for making effective system-wide decisions or for future planning. Data were needed on a timelier basis; detailed information regarding inmate demographics was crucial; and with the advent of such state-level policy changes as the "Three Strikes, You're Out" law, these needs became more critical.

Features of the Jail Profile Survey include:

- Jurisdictions collect data for each of the categories listed in the table on the following page. Data are collected daily, monthly, or quarterly, depending on the availability of the data and the need for precise measurement.
- The data are forwarded to the BOC at the end of each quarter.
- The data are entered into software specifically designed for processing the Jail Profile Survey information.
- The data are analyzed, and quarterly reports are prepared and provided to interested parties including: the participant jurisdictions, the BOC, and the Legislature. The results are also posted on the BOC's website.
- Once a year, an annual report is generated to provide a summary about how local jail systems are functioning.

Although some jurisdictions are unable to supply data for every survey variable, we insist on collecting ADP data from all 64 jurisdictions. When there is missing data for other variables, we make statewide projections based upon the percentage of the ADP represented in the sample of jurisdictions that submitted data. In other words, if we have data regarding illegal/criminal aliens from jurisdictions accounting for 90% of the ADP, we project what the number of reported illegal/criminal aliens would have been had we obtained complete data. In the worst of cases for a variable with incomplete data, the reporting jurisdictions account for at least 85% of the state's ADP. Therefore, we feel that our projections are being made based on a very sizeable and representative sample.